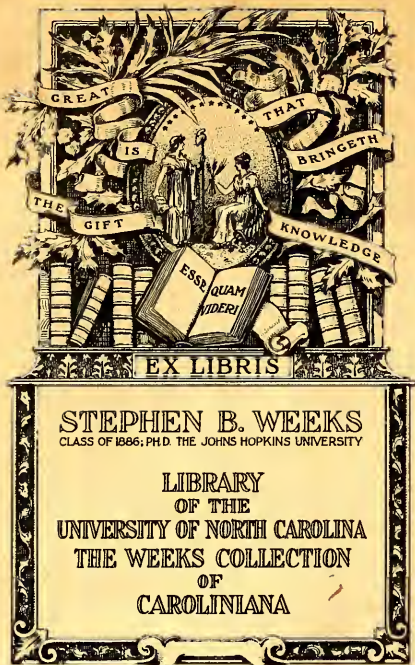


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Crouse
Divisions



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DIVISIONS.

A SERMON PREACHED BY REV. A. L. CROUSE, IN ST. STEPHEN'S
E. L. CHURCH, CATAWBA COUNTY, N. C., NOV. 15, 1903.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF MANY MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGA-
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March 24, 1804.

Stephen B. Weeks

to

N. L. Lenses,

1	Memorial Tributes	15-
1	Biblical Exceptions to the Med. Evon. System	05-
1	Pulpit and Altar Fellowship	05-
1	Christian Coexistence for Little Children	05-
1	Women, Divisions	05-
		<hr/> \$035-

SOME THEOLOGICAL NOTES.

[I have been requested to print the notes which I have used in my teaching the doctrine of the election of grace. The reason given is that some people, either ignorantly or maliciously, have misrepresented my position and teaching, by spreading it abroad that I hold an election aside from Christ, and that I believe and teach, that, from eternity, some people were foreordained to be saved and that others were foreordained to be lost. These notes show that both assertions concerning me are incorrect. If any wish further explanation they are invited to apply to *me* for it, and not to those who do not know or to those who seek to misrepresent my position. If it is necessary to defend the doctrines herein set forth, I will do it.

A. L. CROUSE.]

Sources of Salvation.

The Sources of Salvation are the acts of divine Grace upon which the eternal salvation of man depends. All three persons of the Godhead have been occupied in procuring human salvation. The Father loves those who have fallen; the Son redeems those who have been loved; and the Holy Ghost calls and teaches those who have been redeemed. John 3; 16; 1 Tim. 2: 4.

Book of Concord, 110, 417, 418, (20, 333, 334). Schmid, 277.

We treat of the Sources of Salvation as follows:

- I. *Of the Benevolence of God the Father toward fallen man who is to be delivered and blessed;*
- II. *Of the Fraternal Redemption by Christ;*
- III. *Of the Grace of the Holy Spirit in the application of Redemption.*

The Benevolence of God.

This is the gracious will of God to deliver fallen men from their ruined condition. This gracious will determined the plan in eternity. In time this will has been announced, and the plan has become operative. Gen. 3; 15. The gracious will of God is characterized as: a. *Gratuitous and free.* Gal. 3; 22: Rom. 11; 32: 8; 32, b. *Impartial.* Acts 10; 34, 35: Rom. 2; 11: Col. 3; 25. c. *Sincere and earnest.* Ezek. 18; 23, 32: 33; 11: 2 Pet. 3; 9. d. *Efficacious.* Rom. 2: 4. e. *Not absolute, but conditioned in Christ.* John 3; 16: 1 Tim. 2; 6: Rom. 5; 8. Sch. 278—281, 285—291, [1—11].—*Note*—Much found in this space last referred to is incorrect.

The Election of Grace.

DIFFERENCE AND DEFINITION OF FOREKNOWLEDGE AND ELECTION.

A

1. There is a distinct difference between *præscientia* and *prædestinatio*, or the foreknowledge and election of God.
2. The foreknowledge of God is that by which he knows all things before they occur. Dan. 2; 28. B. C. 583, 711, (496, 62; 713, 714).
3. The foreknowledge of God extends to all creatures, the good and bad: namely he sees and knows all things, that which now occurs or will occur, whether it be good or bad: since, before God, all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and de-

sent. Matt. 10; 29: Ps. 139; 16: Is. 37; 28, and everywhere the scriptures declare the omniscience and omnisapience of God. B C 583, 711, (496, 623).

4. The foreknowledge of God is neither the beginning nor cause of evil. It does not facilitate or promote it, but it nevertheless prescribes certain limits and assigns definite bounds to it. The wicked, perverted will of the devil and of men is the cause of evil. Hosea 13; 9: Ps. 5; 4. B C 583, 711, 712, (496, 624). Sch 284, 285, Obs II.

5. The foreknowledge of God is a correlate of the sovereignty of God. Is. 46; 10: 48; 3: 3; 10, 11: Rom. 9; 19, 20.

B

1. Election is the ordination of God unto salvation. It is a cause which procures, works, facilitates, and promotes our salvation and whatever pertains to it. Eph. 1; 4, 5: Acts 13; 48. B C 583, 711, 712, (624). Sch 294, Quen. (III 19).

2. The eternal election of God does not pertain alike to the good and bad, but only to the children of God, who were elected and ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1; 4, 5, 11: Acts 13; 48: 1 Thess. 5; 9: Rom. 8; 28—30: John 18: 15; 16, 19: 2 Thess. 2; 13: Rom. 9; 15, 16: 11; 5, 6: John 17: 23, 29. B C 583, 711, (496, 624). Hutter's Com. 110, 1.

3. There are two, and only two, causes of election; viz., the *sovereignty of God* and the *merit of Christ*. 1 Thess. 5; 9: Eph. 1; 4—7: Rom. 9; 11; 5, 6. B C 586, (499). Sch 294, (c)—partly incorrect.

4. In its relation to redemption, the election of God is a consequence of redemption and belongs to it. Eph. 1; 4—7. B C 583, 714, (626).

5. In treating of calling in its relation to election it must be maintained that God has one earnest, efficient call, through his Word, which is made, not to the elect only, but to all, because all are redeemed. Matt. 22; 3, 4: Luke 24; 47: Rom. 8; 30. B C

714—717, (627—630).

6. As the election of God is *unto* salvation, so is it in the same way *unto* whatever pertains to it: viz., *unto* calling, illumination, repentance, faith, justification, the cross, perseverance, sanctification, etc. Rom. 8; 28—39; John 10; 27—29; 15; 16; 19; Acts 13; 48; Rom. 9; 11, 15, 16, 23; 2 Thess. 2; 13; 2 Tim. 1; 9; B C 712, 713, 714, 718, 719, (624, 626, 627, 631, 632).

7. The election of God is a mystery which we cannot understand, and which we should not attempt to pry into. Some thing concerning it he has revealed, and these we may and should know Rom. 11; 33, 34. B C 714, 716, 718, 720, 721, (627, 629, 633, 634, 635).

8. The term election is used in only one sense; that is, applies to the good and beloved people of God. It is not used both a narrower and wider sense. In the Confessions some words, as *regeneration*, are used in both a narrower and a wider sense, but it is always so stated. The Confessions make no statement about election. B C. Art. on Election.

9. Referring to redemption the "eight points" treat of the whole human race. Referring to election as a consequence of redemption, they treat of the good and beloved people of God alone. B C 713, 714, (626, 627).

10. The elect are those who are written in Christ the book of life, and who hear his voice and follow him. Eph. 1; 11; Joh 10; 27, 28. B C. 713, 714, 716, 722, 823, (626, 627, 634, 635).

11. Their evidence of election is their faith in God's promise of grace and their belief of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Rom. 15; 4; 2 Tim. 2; 19; John 10; 28; Luke 11; 11—13; John 37; 2 Thess. 2; 13, 14. B C 722, 727, (635, 639, 640).

[Quotations from B. C. in parentheses are from New Mark First Edition; without parentheses from the Second Edition.]

DIVISIONS.

A SERMON PREACHED BY REV. A. L. CROUSE, IN ST. STEPHEN'S
E. L. CHURCH, CATAWBA COUNTY, N. C., NOV. 15, 1903.

TEXT—Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Rom. 16, 17, 18.

At one time, during the days of our Lord's humiliation, a division occurred among his disciples, of which we have an account in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. It was made manifest by the doctrine of Jesus, as it was spoken by himself. He delivered the doctrine of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and "many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can hear it?'" John 6; 60. He simply asked: "Doth this offend you?" but did not change his teaching. Finally, "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." John 6; 66. He did not call them to return and offer them a compromise. His doctrine was true and must stand, even though all should leave him alone.

Since that day, there have been many divisions among those who profess to be his followers. The great majority of these divisions have been wrong. None of them that are contrary to his doctrine are right, but they are sinful. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. 14; 23, and, as "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. 10; 17, a proper rule is furn-

ished for judging all divisions. Therefore, lest there be sin among us on account of a division, we should "take heed how we hear." Luke 8. 18. Especially is this so, when we have to do with divisions and offences in a congregation of God's Church, such as now confronts every member of our congregation, yea; and of the whole pastorate also. It is right, or it is wrong. It cannot be both right and wrong. Neither can it be treated with indifference, lest silence give consent to it. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," Rom. 14; 5, because "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," Matt. 12; 36. Let us therefore consider:

- I. WHETHER THIS DIVISION IS RIGHT OR WRONG;
- II. OUR DUTY.

This division is right, if it is in accord with the doctrine of the Bible. but it is wrong, it is sinful, if it is a division and an offence *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*. Have you, the members of this congregation, learned the true doctrine? Your former pastors and your present pastor have baptized you and your children "into Christ." I have never heard that you found fault with your former pastors about the doctrine and administration of the Sacrament of Baptism. And I solemnly declare that I have baptized your children according to the institution and command of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have ever been ready to baptize them when you brought them into the church, and have not spared my often feeble strength and health to go to your homes, by day and by night, to administer this saving means to your sick babes, that you might have assurance, comfort, and hope, if the Lord should call

them away.

When your loved ones have been sick, even unto death, I have visited them, and spoken to them the true doctrine, and prayed fervently for them. When some of them have been taken, I have attended upon the last, solemn service, and instructed and comforted you with the pure doctrine of God's word, that "you sorrow not even as others which have no hope." I. Thess. 4: 13.

You have sent your children to me in the Sunday-school and in the catechising, and I have instructed them in the doctrine. Many of you have thus learned the doctrine. Can any of you thus instructed say that you have not learned the right doctrine of your salvation? I ask you to think seriously of *the doctrine which you have learned*. If it is true it must not be treated lightly, much less can there be *divisions and offences contrary to it*, without danger to those who cause them.

For nearly fourteen years, I have preached to you the word of truth. It has often been pointed and fitted many a case, but it has never been shown that it was not true. Never in all these years has the pastor been corrected in his doctrine, and he has not been accused to the congregation. Especially is this true, when it was necessary to speak very boldly during the great controversy concerning the election of grace.

I have administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the institution and command of Christ, and you have received it according to *the doctrine which you have learned* through your old pastors from the Holy Scriptures and the Symbolical Books of our Lutheran Church.

These things being so, and they have not been denied, there is no cause here for *divisions and offences*, and therefore they must be *contrary to the doctrine which ye*

have learned. Such a cause or causes are dangerous, because "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

In the trouble concerning election, there were no charges of false doctrine preferred against the pastor. He was accused of nothing more than disagreement with the majority of the members of the Synod, and, in a meeting, they decided, that because they were "not agreed" with him they could not fellowship him, and he decided that for the same reason he could not fellowship them. The conclusion and decision were mutual, both coming to the same understanding, and it was for this cause, and not for false doctrine, that the pastor was suspended. The congregation, in a plain resolution, stood by him, and there was no division, except the withdrawal of a few, who "went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." I. John 2; 19. Since then the Synod has revoked all action taken relative to the matter, and the pastor and congregation stand fully vindicated. Therefore, for this cause, the Synod can not encourage and foster any divisions, unless they be *contrary to the doctrine which you have learned.*

Further, it is well to inquire about the late action of the Synod in its resolution to encourage and foster divisions. Is it right, or is it wrong? If it is right, then those who accept and divide themselves from the body and communion of the old mother congregation, are doing that which is according to Scripture, and therefore well pleasing to God. If it is not right, then those who refuse to fall in with the *divisions and offences* will do right if they *avoid them*, and those who do not *avoid them* will be going *contrary to the doctrine which they have learned.*

The Synod preferred no charges of false doctrine

against either the pastor or the congregation. Therefore, their doctrine must be right. It has not been denied. It has not even been called into question. It was even asserted upon the floor of Synod, that they all hold what the pastor stated as his position, and it was not denied by a single man. While the question of causing, or fostering, a division was discussed, one pastor well exclaimed: "Must I beg my people for money to send a man to St. Stephen's to teach what Bro. Crouse teaches!" No one rebuked him, or pretended to say that the pastor is teaching false doctrine or is practicing things contrary to the Scripture and the teaching of the Lutheran Church, and, therefore, we must send a man to save those people from error, and that there must be a division according to the pure doctrine and practice.

These things being so, and they cannot be denied, it surely follows that somebody is *causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine*, and not in harmony with it. Thus they are doing wrong, and the command of the text is plain—*avoid them*.

The action of Synod in taking up and providing for a division in this congregation is simply this:

"That if this statement be not satisfactory to Synod that we recommend that said petitioners organize themselves into a congregation, and that the Executive Committee of Missions of the North Carolina Conference of this Synod aid them in securing a pastor."

It does not proceed upon the ground of a single fault of doctrine on the part of either the pastor or congregation, but simply because the statement of the pastor alone was not satisfactory to the Synod and did not meet the wants of said petitioners. The congregation was not heard, and has not been consulted. Why was it not what was wanted? Evidently because the pastor stated

that he would not co-operate with the Synod now, and gave his reasons, which were, in substance, that he was not satisfied with certain changes made by the Synod in the past, which affect, as he conscientiously believes, its loyalty to the sound doctrine and true practice of the Lutheran Church, and also because of its fellowship and co-operation with the United Synod of the Lutheran Church in the South in its uncertain and often erring course. This is a relation which is not satisfactory to many of the members of the Tennessee Synod itself, because in their consciences they are aware that it is not according to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and they know that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." According to the text and other Scripture, this refusal of the pastor is not a good cause of division, and some of the members of the Synod, knowing it well, voted against it. They could not endorse *divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine* which they believe.

Synods and conferences are simply arrangements made by certain portions of the Church. They are not provided for and enjoined by God's word. As long as they assist properly in the work of the Church, and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," Jude 3, pastors and congregations do well to co-operate with them, but when they *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they have learned*, they do wrong, and it is more necessary to *avoid them*, than it is to avoid a few, because, being composed of many, their influence is more powerful. This being so concerning synods and conferences, and it cannot be denied from the Bible, a refusal on the part of a pastor to have pulpit and altar fellowship with them for a time is not contrary to the doctrine, and is not a good and

sufficient cause for *divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine* in any congregation or body of God's people.

Another thing yet. If a pastor is guilty of immoral conduct, that itself is contrary to sound doctrine. If he is admonished and will not repent and reform, and is fairly tried and condemned by a congregation or a Synod, the people dare not hear him, but must separate him from their community. If a majority of a congregation refuse to condemn him, but cling to and follow him in his sin, that also is contrary to the faith, and a division from him and his adherents would not be a division *contrary to the doctrine*. Is there a case of this kind among us, or in the Synod? Let each one lay this to heart, because it will come home sooner or later. If God's prophets are above reproach and sound in doctrine, the people should beware how they touch them. Ps. 105, 15. They are to be held, as they really are, as being above reproach, so long as the people do not admonish and rebuke them, and finally bring them to trial in an orderly way. They are only human beings and are no more without faults than many other human beings, but only when they have been admonished, fairly tried and lawfully condemned, are they to be cast out or forsaken. Their weaknesses are not a cause for division, and especially so, before they have been pointed out.

OUR DUTY.

In the first place we should examine these things that we may know whether they are right or wrong. St. Paul says: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." II. Cor. 13, 5. Examine what you think about this matter. Prove your own selves and see whether what you think and what you are about to do is "in the faith," because "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Examine your own selves whether

what you would like to have and do is right or wrong. What you may think, feel, or prefer is no more a true test in this matter than in any other doctrine or work. What God teaches and shows is the thing necessary for us to know, and by that we are to decide.

Therefore, the text enjoins upon us to *mark* certain ones, and tells us also who they are. We are besought to mark the character of the *divisions and offences*. It is not said that we shall take note of their social standing in the neighborhood, or their opinions about the affairs of the world, such as their politics, how they vote at elections, or any of the many things which do not necessarily affect their faith and their relation to the Church. These are not good causes of division, however much men may differ in regard to them. But their doctrine is, and that must be judged, because the Scripture says: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." II. John 10, 11. If a division springs up, we are bound, by this Scripture, to mark those who cause it, if it is *contrary to the doctrine which we have learned*, because they have no right to bring about such a state of affairs. Just as we have no right to mark them on account of social and political opinions, so have they no right to cause divisions on account of such things.

Then you should bear in mind that this is an individual responsibility. You must believe and act for yourself. This may cost you much. Jesus himself taught this doctrine in the following words: "For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father;

the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Luke 12; 52, 53. And all this is of necessity, so that there be no divisions in the true body of Christ, even for the sake of the most precious and lovely thing on earth. Divisions and offences will come, but each one must see to it that they are not contrary to the doctrine, like those who were offended at Jesus and his doctrine, as it is told in the sixth chapter of St. John. It is a serious thing to the individual who causes offences. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Matt. 18; 7.

And right here let us beware lest we be discouraged by the outcry of men that we are the cause of divisions and offences, so that they may shield themselves by outwardly seeking to throw the responsibility upon others. We are not at fault, if we abide in the doctrine of Christ. The twelve disciples who remained with Jesus were not the cause of the division, but those were guilty who went back and walked no more with him. Paul was not to blame when Peter "withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision," Gal. 2; 12, but Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed," and Peter repented and returned, not being willing to cause a division contrary to the common doctrine, which he had learned as well as Paul. Luther was not the cause of the division of the Church in his time, but the pope and his followers *caused the divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine*, and Luther and his people obeyed God in our text, and *avoided them*. David Henkel and the few who were with him were not the cause of the division of the Lutheran Church in this

country, but they who were not loyal to the pure doctrine were to be blamed. And so, if we have the true doctrine, and we are sure we have, and the Synod does not deny it, we are not the cause of the division, and our duty is to stand firm and be faithful to what we have learned. Having then this pure doctrine, and honestly conforming our practice to it, we need not be alarmed and turned from the right way, if we should be accused of being the cause of the division. We read in Acts 17, that Paul and Silas were accused of turning the world upside down, but they were faithful in the pure doctrine, and the accusation was false.

But not only are we to investigate the causes of divisions and offences, and mark those who cause them, but we are to *avoid them*. We must not consent to and fall in with them, in order that the trouble may be patched up, so that in this way there may be no division. When they *cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine*, which all have learned, there is a sad want of agreement between us and them, and how "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3; 3. The division is deplorable, but those who make it without a doctrinal reason are to be blamed, and they must answer to God for it. For this very good reason, both the pastor and the congregation have refused fellowship with the Synod. By an outward union the Synod, as a body, has caused a division with us, with whom it claims that it agrees in doctrine. It should not condemn us because we refuse fellowship for this same reason which moves it, especially some of its pastors and congregations, to refuse to cooperate with the United Synod. The United Synod does not condemn pulpit and altar fellowship with errorists. One of its synods has even voted in favor of open or mixed communion. For us to fellowship those who

do such things would only be a little more round-about way of doing the same thing ourselves. No, they cause the offence, and we must *avoid them*, by refusing fellowship directly or indirectly. It is as much wrong to receive and conceal stolen goods as it is to steal them, and so it would be as much wrong for us to fellowship the man or synod who fellowships those of the contrary and condemned doctrine, as it would be to fellowship them directly. It is only another way of doing it. No, we must *avoid them*, and we must therefore avoid this dividing and offending movement toward such indirect fellowship of error and those who continue so long in it. Therefore, we earnestly warn every member of this congregation, and we *beseech* each and every one to consider well the great responsibility of this division, and especially so, since there is no good and sufficient reason for it.

Now which course will you take? Will you take your Bibles, sit down, and prayerfully study the question, or will you allow those to lead you, who may have only a selfish motive, regardless of the doctrine. The text teaches that they who do such things must have a selfish motive, when it says they *serve their own belly*, that is, seek to gratify their own greed to gather up dollars and cents and to count names. Take which ever side you will, please remember this, that you will be held accountable for it.

And now we have examined and summed up the matter, and are ready to commit it to you. In the light of God's word, in the light of what you have learned, and in the light of the Synod's own admission and action, this division is wrong. Whether it will prosper, or whether it will perish, no one can tell. But its prosperity, if it be allowed it, will not prove that it is right.

That can be determined by God's word alone. Wrong things have prospered greatly for a time. The Roman Catholics, the Mormons, and others have increased in numbers and wealth, but these successes do not justify them in the sight of God. So it may be with this division.

On the other hand, those who cling to the true faith and doctrine should expect trouble and opposition. But they have the promises. They know the voice of their Good Shepherd, and, while they follow him in the humiliation, however dangerous and unpleasant the way, he will never lose them, nor will the Father ever suffer any to pluck them out of his hand. John 10; 28, 29. And as he goes forth calling them by name, and leading them in and out to find pasture, they hear him saying: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12; 32. They go on, "faint, yet pursuing," Judges 8; 4, "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," II. Peter 3; 18, so that, even while yet camping in the wilderness, they are "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8; 38, 39, and in the end are confident and bold and joyful to say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II. Tim. 4; 7, 8.

Yea, yea, it shall be so.

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